

Message Text

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FOR OES/APT/SA

DEPT PASS TO NASA HQ, CODE I, U. JOHN SAKSS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, JA, US

SUBJECT: VIKING MISSION

REF: TOKYO 10705

1. AS PLANNED, SCICOUNS PRESENTED BRIEFING ON VIKING MISSION AND SHOWED TWO NASA MOVIES ("MARS: THE SEARCH BEGINS", "VIKING") TO AUDIENCE OF 70 ON JULY 28. CONFERENCE ROOM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY WAS LOCATION, WITH WALLS AND BLACKBOARDS DECORATED WITH PHOTOS AND ART WORK FURNISHED BY NASA. TECHNICAL INFORMATION KITS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO AUDIENCE.

2. AUDIENCE CONSISTED OF SCIENCE COUNSELORS FROM SEVERAL AGENCIES; REPS OF USG AGENCIES ATTACHED TO EMBASSY; SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS OF STA, NASDA, AND UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO; AND SCIENCE WRITERS FROM JAPANESE NEWS MEDIA. PROMINENT INDIVIDUALS PRESENT INCLUDED DR. HIDEO SHIMA, PRESIDENT OF NASDA; DR. MASAO YOSHIKI AND MR. TSUYOSHI AMIJIMA, COMMISSIONERS OF GOJ SPACE ACTIVITIES COMMISSION. (MINISTER SASAKI OF STA HAD PLANNED TO ATTEND BUT WAS FORCED TO BE ABSENT BECAUSE OF POLITICAL FUROR OVER ARREST OF FORMER PM TANAKA).

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3. STA IS SHOWING THE TWO MOVIES TO ITS WORKING-LEVEL STAFF TODAY. NASDA WILL DO SAME TOMORROW. BRITISH EMBASSY AND NHK (GOVERNMENT TV NETWORK) HAVE REQUESTED LOAN OF FILMS. EMBASSY IS PLANNING BRIEFING AND MOVIE SHOWING FOR STAFF AND FAMILIES NEXT WEEK.

4. RESPONSE TO MOVIES AND BRIEFING WAS EXCELLENT, GIVING FURTHER EVIDENCE OF ENORMOUS INTEREST IN VIKING AMONG BOTH LAYMEN AND TECHNOLOGISTS IN JAPAN. EMBASSY HOPES THAT DEPT, USIA, AND NASA WILL CONTINUE TO FURNISH TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON VIKING I AND II. GOOD QUALITY PHOTOS, COLOR AND B/W, FROM MARS ARE VALUED ESPECIALLY, BUT ALL KINDS OF DATA ON METEOROLOGY, ATMOSPHERIC COMPOSITION, ETC., MOST WELCOME AND USEFUL.

7. COMMENT: IN EVENT THAT THERE IS ANY CONCERN IN U.S. THAT VIKING MISSION IS LOOKED UPON AS SOME KIND OF PUBLICITY VENTURE BY PEOPLE ABROAD, WE CAN VOUCH FOR FACT THAT JAPANESE ARE AWED BY TECHNICAL SOPHISTICATION AND COMPLEXITY OF MISSION AND ARE EAGER TO OBTAIN ALL INFORMATION POSSIBLE ON RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS. MEDIA CONTINUE TO GIVE DAILY TV, RADIO, AND NEWSPAPER COVERAGE TO SUBJECT, ALTHOUGH SCIENTIFIC NEWS MUST TAKE SECOND PLACE TO SERIOUS POLITICAL CRISIS NOW BEFORE JAPANESE PEOPLE.
SHOESMITH

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